

Tbilisi 28 – 29 October
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- It's rare to have the opportunity to create BA, MA and PhD programmes in unison. It provides a chance to create linkages, reinforce the complementarity of learning outcomes at all levels and to build a community and identity to the benefit of both staff and students.
- One of the core strengths of what Nino and team have created is that each of the three levels can 'stand-alone', but at the same time they build upon each other with a logical flow between the three classes of degree.
- TSU has, via the Institute, become a 'hub' for European Studies in the South Caucasus. This also implies that more can be done in the immediate South Caucasus region, in terms of inter-university academic collaboration in European studies.
- A strength (for me) of the suite of programmes and that they offer a coverage of European studies that is not just from a Brussels-centric perspective but has a strong GE relevance – relating to AA/DCFTA for example. It should mean that graduates will aspire to stay in GE and play a role in the country's Europeanisation and not just flock to Brussels.

Points for consideration

1. **Student competencies.** One of the challenges of interdisciplinarity is how to ensure that all students have sufficient competencies in all relevant disciplines, this, in my experience, normally means law and economics are the trickiest for students to 'get in to' and do well at; they tend to be the subjects where students have less confidence and often need additional tutoring.

What has been the level of students' competencies in these spheres? And what measures does TSU have in place to deal with such situations of variable knowledge / competencies amongst students?

2. **The nature of the thesis.** Considering thesis topics at BA and MA levels how does the process of choosing and refining topics take place? Is supervision provided only from within Institute staff or are other staff brought in from across TSU? Are choices of topics linked to courses? **Worth thinking about:** must theses be academic in nature, or can students have the option of doing a policy-relevant / evaluation / problem-oriented MBA style approach? The latter is often useful as it means that a student can link their thesis to their career plans, to develop 'an expertise' and gain policy-relevant research and analytical skills.

3. **Large number of electives** What measures are in place to deal with situations when modules are not feasible to deliver due to small numbers, which can lead to student disappointment?

4. **Cross-cutting issues ie.** gender, human rights, are they embedded into the curriculum? For 'european' and programmes concentrating on EU issues with a normative role, it's important to embed these themes.

5. **Vocational and career** related aspects of programmes, is it possible to integrate a credited internship into the BA? Some of the best BA and MA programmes do this

6. **What synergies are created** with your other MA programmes, such as with the Global Campus democracy and human right MA with UA and AM and how will the whole portfolio look when your dual degrees kick-off. **Worth thinking about:** students thrive in a community setting (and encourages them to stay and progress from BA to MA), thus it's important that different programmes do not exist in isolation from each other. Sharing core mandatory courses, joint sessions etc should be encouraged, where possible.

7. **Quality assurance** measures need to be in place to give students and staff chances to give feedback and for the programme's management to draw lessons and make changes to courses, timetable, teaching methods, methods of assessment etc, where and when needed. **Worth thinking about:** (if not already in place) QA methodology focused on 'what works best' questions and using best practice.

8. **Next steps:** never too early to establish an alumni association.